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AVENGERS QUINJETS!
FANTASTIC FOUR
FANTASTICARS! COAST
GUARD HELICOPTERS!

ALLIED IN A MASSIVE
RESCUE EFFORT OVER
THE HUDSON RIVER--

--THE SINKING CIRCLE LINE
TOUR SHIP THE LATEST
CASUALTY IN THE SILICON
PIRATES' WAR ON NEW YORK!

OFFICIALS CONTINUE TO
SUPPORT A VIRTUAL MARTIAL
LAW AS THE ONLY SECURITY
AGAINST THESE "INFORMA-
TIONAL TERRORISTS"--

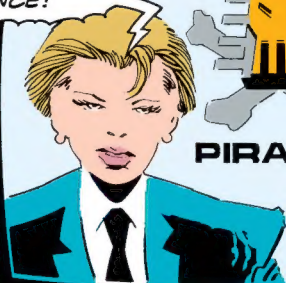
--THE PIRATES DEMANDS
FOR OPEN ACCESS TO THE
INFOBAHN BACKED BY
RANDOM ACTS OF
VIOLENCE!

SILICON

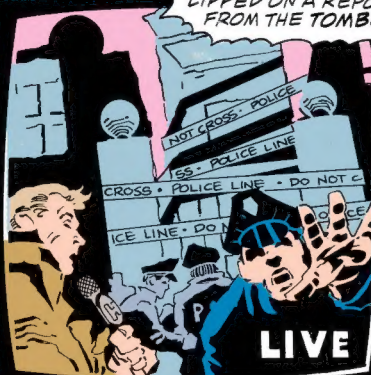


PIRATES

WFET



IN OTHER FISK
ENTERTAINMENT TELEVISION
NEWS, POLICE REMAIN TIGHT-
LIPPED ON A REPORTED ESCAPE
FROM THE TOMBS PRISON...



100 CENTRE STREET.
THE TOMBS.

ONCE, MEN AND WOMEN
WERE SENT HERE TO DIE
AND BE FORGOTTEN.

DEATH STILL LURKS IN
THESE SHADOWS TO
HELP THE PLACE LIVE
DOWN TO ITS NAME.

THE OUTLINE WAS A
PUBLIC DEFENDER
CALLED JACK FARGO.
BUT HE WON'T GO
UNREMEMBERED.

BECAUSE OUT TO
AVENGE THIS INJUSTICE
IS A CRUSADER
NAMED DAREDEVIL.

"... secrecy is the keystone to
all tyranny."


-Robert Heinlein, Revolt in
2100

by **D.G. CHICHESTER**
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TREE of KNOWLEDGE ~ part 5

THE LINE EATERS



**HYPERKEEN SENSES
TRACE THE SCENE OF
THE CRIME, THE BLIND
MAN HUNTING CLUES.**

**YOU OWE BIG
FOR LETTIN' YOU IN
HERE TO SNIFF AROUND,
HORNHEAD! I DON'T KNOW
WHAT YOU EXPECT TO FIND,
THOUGH!**



**THE FORENSIC
BOYS STRUTTED THEIR
STUFF AND CAME UP
EMPTY...**

**... NOT THAT ONE POOR
P.D. HELD A LOT OF INTEREST
WHEN THERE'S OFFICERS
DOWN ACROSS HALF THE
BUILDING!**



**SURE YOU
DON'T WANT A
LIGHT?**

POSITIVE.

**FINGERTIPS
TINGLE.**

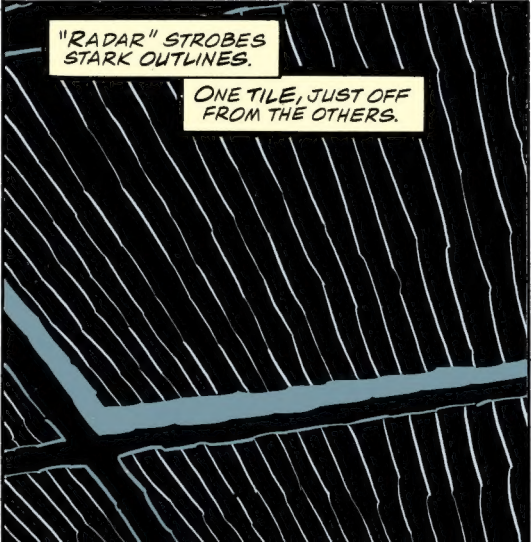
**SOMETHING BRITTLE AMONG
THE CIGARETTE ASH AND
CONCRETE GRIT.**

**MINUTE FLAKES,
LIKE CRYSTAL.**



**SMELLING ACRID
AND CHEMICAL.**

**TRACK THE
SCENT UP.**



**"RADAR" STROBES
STARK OUTLINES.**

**ONE TILE, JUST OFF
FROM THE OTHERS.**



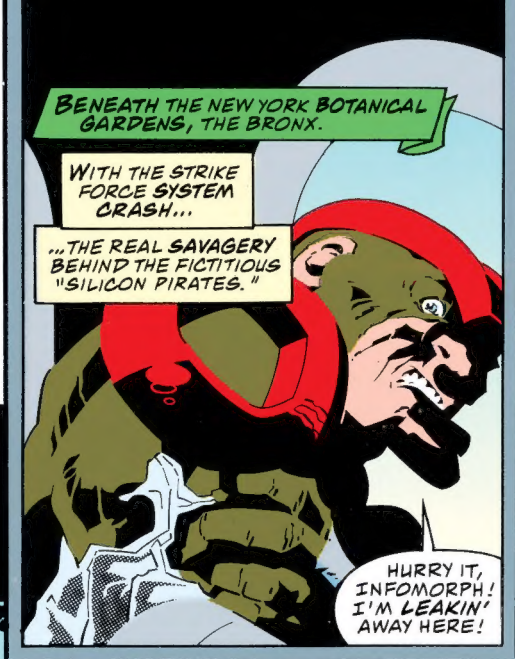


WHOEVER-- WHATEVER-- IT CAME FROM IS WHAT **TOOK SPECTRUM** AND LEFT THAT TRAIL OF **COPS** AS A **DIVERSION**!

LOTTA **MAYBES**! BUT...

BUT WHAT?

MAYBE FOR THE TIME YOU CAN CALL THOSE **HORNS** YOURS...



BENEATH THE NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDENS, THE BRONX.

WITH THE STRIKE FORCE SYSTEM CRASH...

...THE REAL SAVAGERY BEHIND THE FICTITIOUS "SILICON PIRATES."

HURRY IT, INFOMORPH! I'M LEAKIN' AWAY HERE!

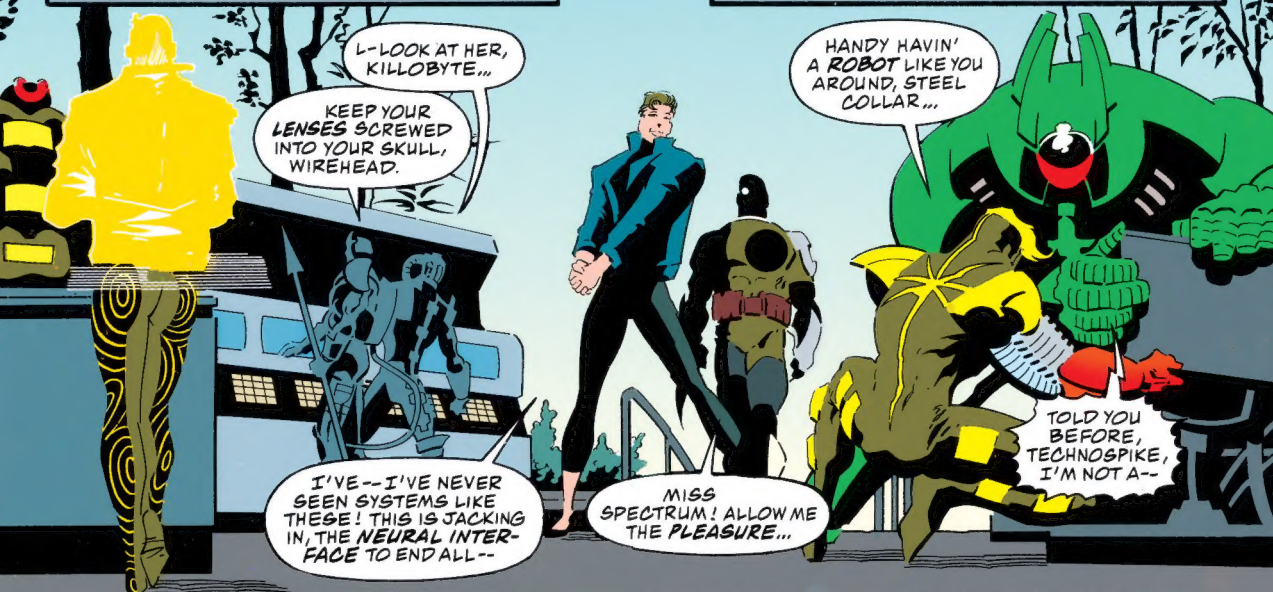


WE SHOULD BE SO LUCKY, BITMAP!

BIO-TEXTURE MAPPING ON... RENDERING PHYSICIAN IMAGE IN THREE DIMENSIONS...

TEARING YOUR CASING WAS CLUMSY... YOU BETTER NOT HAVE LEFT ANY GLOBULES BEHIND!

I CLEANED UP AFTER MYSELF, PANCAKE-FACE! NOW FINISH RUNNING YOUR DOC SIMULATION AN' PATCH ME!



L-LOOK AT HER, KILLOBYTE...

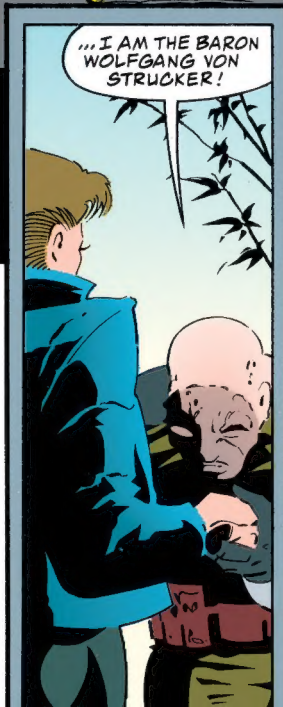
KEEP YOUR LENSES SCREWED INTO YOUR SKULL, WIREHEAD.

HANDY HAVIN' A ROBOT LIKE YOU AROUND, STEEL COLLAR...

I'VE--I'VE NEVER SEEN SYSTEMS LIKE THESE! THIS IS JACKING IN, THE NEURAL INTER-FACE TO END ALL--

MISS SPECTRUM! ALLOW ME THE PLEASURE...

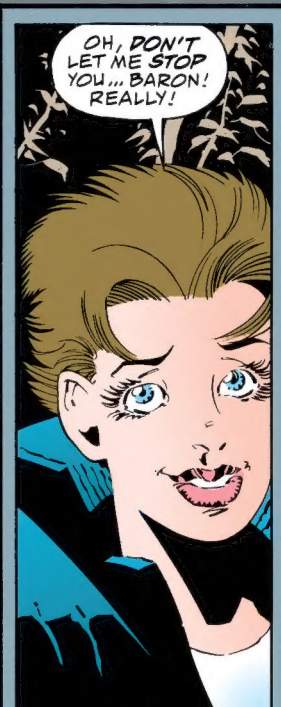
TOLD YOU BEFORE, TECHNO SPIKE, I'M NOT A--



...I AM THE BARON WOLFGANG VON STRUCKER!



OH, FORGIVE ME! SURELY A MODERN YOUNG WOMAN HAS NO INTEREST IN MY DATED MANNER OF GREETING!

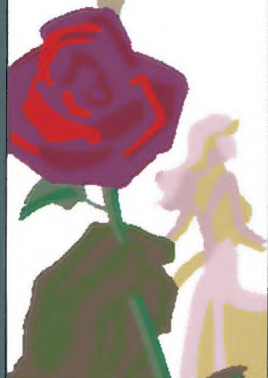


OH, DON'T LET ME STOP YOU... BARON! REALLY!



VERY WELL. VERY WISE.

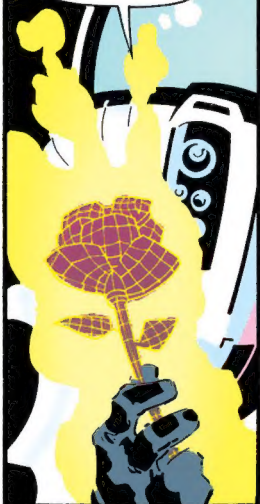
THE MUD. WIREHEAD'S
VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT.



>YOU SEE A DAZZLING
PRINCESS. THE ENCHANT-
ED ROSE YOU STOLE
FROM THE GRUE MAY WIN
HER HEART.

>GIVE ROSE TO
PRINCESS!

GIVE ROSE TO
PRINCESS!



PLANT THE
VIRTUAL FTD BACK IN
THE MUD, TROGLODYTE!
THE BARON WOULDN'T
APPRECIATE YOU
CUTTING IN!



SNEAK!

THIS HARD
DRIVE ISN'T
OFF THE SHELF...
IT'S LIKE ONE
OF KNOWBOT'S
HACKS...



A LINE EATER?
BUT THEY'RE
JUST TALK--
MYTHS!

YOUR DEPARTED
FRIEND WAS IN MY EMPLOY,
SINCLAIR, SEARCHING
NODES FOR THE NATIONAL
SECURITY AGENCY'S LOCAL
LINE EATER!



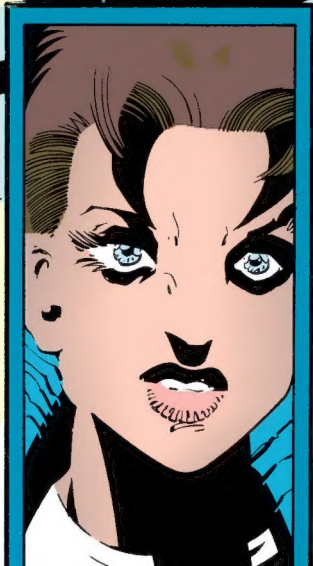
MYTHS THAT MONI-
TOR--VIOLATE--YOUR
PRIVATE TELECOM-
MUNICATIONS FOR "NATIONAL
SECURITY"!

THE LINE EATERS ARE
AS REAL AS THE SPECIFI-
CATIONS THEY CONTAIN
FOR THE GOVERNMENT'S
CLIPPER CHIP!

IS THAT
WHAT YOU'RE
AFTER? SO IF
THE FEDS GET
THEIR WAY--


--A CLIPPER
IN EVERY
PHONE AND FAX
AND COMPUTER
TO TAP WHENEVER
--WHOEVER--

--YOU'LL
BE ABLE TO
DO THE SAME!
NO MORE
SECRETS...



NO, MY DEAR...NOT
ENOUGH SECRETS!
NOT CRYPTANALYSIS--
BREAKING CODES!
CRYPTOGRAPHY--
MAKING THEM!

WITH CLIPPER
PROGRAMMING, WE
WILL PROVIDE AN UN-
BREAKABLE COUNTER-
SYSTEM TO THE
VULNERABLE PUBLIC!



THAT POWER OF
ENCRYPTION IN THE HANDS
OF EVERYONE WILL SOW THE
SEEDS OF MISTRUST! WHO
IS HIDING WHAT, AND WHY?

UNABLE TO
EAVESDROP, THE SO-
CALLED LAW WILL BE
FORCED TO RESORT TO
GESTAPO TECHNIQUES!
THE SYSTEM BREAKS
DOWN!

ANARCHY
PREVAILS! AND
FROM THAT CHAOS,
ONLY THE TRUE
SURVIVOR WILL
EMERGE!




BUT IN HIS GREED, KNOWBOT
ENCODED THE LOCATION OF THE LINE
EATER! YOU ARE THE ONE I NEED
TO CRACK HIS DIGITAL LOCK!

I MAKE NO
APOLOGIES FOR MY
ZEAL, CHILD!


ARE YOU STRONG
ENOUGH TO ADMIT YOUR
OWN PASSION FOR
TECHNOLOGY OVER-
COMES ANY MORAL
QUESTION?

LET'S
GAIN SOME
UNAUTHORIZED
ACCESS...




SHE REMINDS
ME... OF ME...

WELL,
THEN,
COLLAR,
YOU'VE
LET YOUR
FIGURE
GO
SOME!



LIKE YOU,
TOO, I'D
BET. WHAT
WERE YOU
LIKE AS A
KID?

TOYS, CRAYONS
PUSHED ASIDE
TO PULL APART
MOVING PARTS
AND MOTORS.

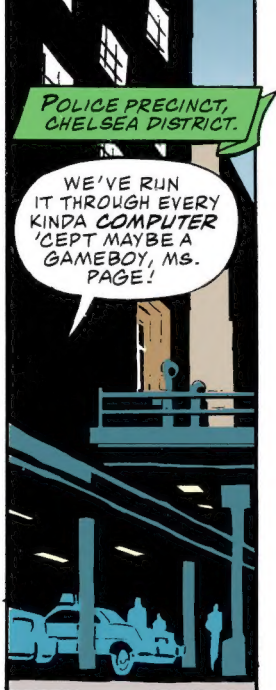


BUT BIT DECAY
SETS IN. WE
LOSE OUR
GRIP ON
R--REAL
LIFE.

WHAT--WHATTA
YOU GOT UNDER
THERE? UGH--
BLETCHEROUS!



SHE
REMINDS ME...
OF ME...

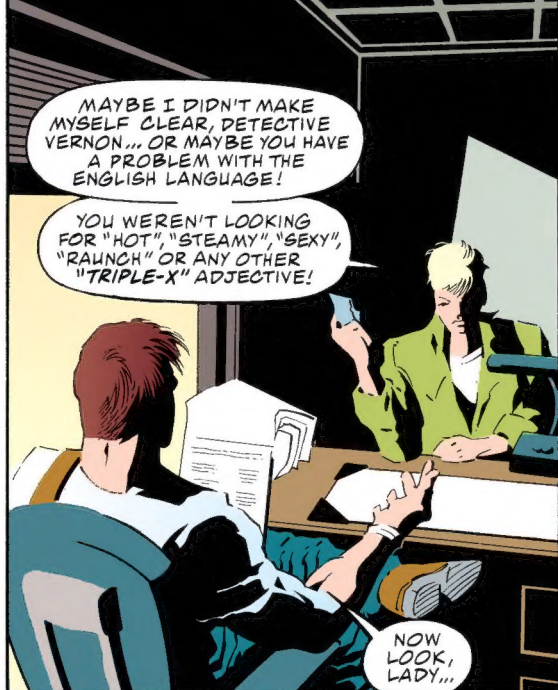


POLICE PRECINCT,
CHELSEA DISTRICT.

WE'VE RUN
IT THROUGH EVERY
KINDA COMPUTER
'CEPT MAYBE A
GAMEBOY, MS.
PAGE!



THE CLOSEST
THIS DISK'S GOT
TO HOT STUFF WAS
WHEN SGT. KINNEY
ALMOST PUT HIS
MORNING COFFEE
CUP ON IT!



MAYBE I DIDN'T MAKE
MYSELF CLEAR, DETECTIVE
VERNON... OR MAYBE YOU HAVE
A PROBLEM WITH THE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE!

YOU WEREN'T LOOKING
FOR "HOT", "STEAMY", "SEXY",
"RAUNCH" OR ANY OTHER
"TRIPLE-X" ADJECTIVE!

NOW
LOOK,
LADY...



NO--YOU LOOK!
AGAIN AND AGAIN UNTIL
YOU SEE WHAT I SAW!
THAT VIDEO CLIP--THAT
LITTLE GIRL--

AND IF YOU
HAD EVIDENCE--
ENGLISH ENOUGH
FOR YOU, MS. PAGE?
-- MAYBE WE
COULD MOVE!



THIS CITY'S PRETTY
MUCH AT WAR ON A
GOOD DAY, AND WITH
THIS TERRORIST
BULL--LOOK, WE
JUST DON'T HAVE
TIME!

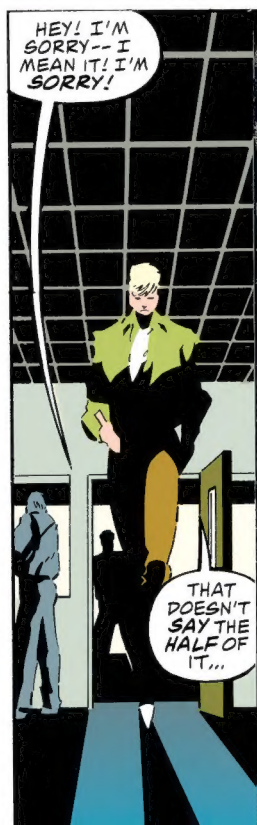


I MEAN... THIS SOME
KIND OF PUBLICITY
STUNT? YOU MAKIN' A
COMEBACK? I WAS AT
A STAG LAST MONTH
WITH ONE OF YOUR
VIDEOS--



SO NOW I'M A TRAMP
YOU CAN LEER AT, AND
THAT CHILD IS WRITTEN
OFF AS LOST, THAT IT?

WHATEVER
HAPPENED TO
PROTECT AND
SERVE?



HEY! I'M
SORRY-- I
MEAN IT! I'M
SORRY!

THAT
DOESN'T
SAY THE
HALF OF
IT...

AVENUE C.

PATTERNS OF METAL,
ETCHED INSIDE HIS HEAD.

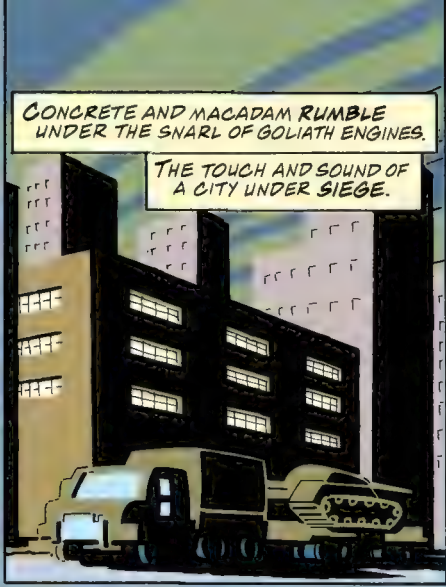
CRUDE AND RAW, A
BLIND MAN'S MAZE.

MATT MURDOCK "WALKS"
IT THROUGH WITHOUT
BREAKING A SWEAT.

THMMK!

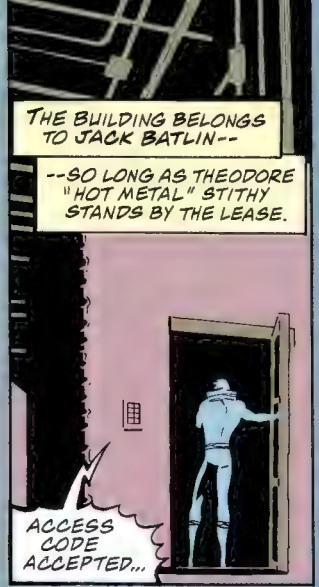


ENHANCED SENSES
RELAX, REACHING OUT.



CONCRETE AND MACADAM RUMBLE
UNDER THE SNARL OF GOLIATH ENGINES.

THE TOUCH AND SOUND OF
A CITY UNDER SIEGE.



THE BUILDING BELONGS
TO JACK BATLIN--

--SO LONG AS THEODORE
"HOT METAL" STITHY
STANDS BY THE LEASE.

ACCESS
CODE
ACCEPTED...



THE ROOM, THOUGH, BELONGS
TO MATT MURDOCK--

--THE TRUTH UNDERNEATH
THE BATLIN COVER.

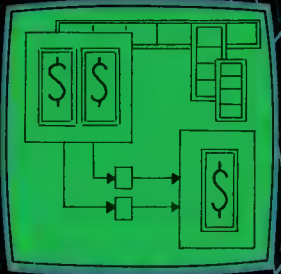
MURDOCK BECAME A
TARGET, A RISK TO
EVERYONE AROUND HIM.

BATLIN IS A "SOCIAL
ENGINEER." A CON
ARTIST WITH STREET
CONTACTS TO HELP
KEEP THE MAN IN THE
GAME.

AND THE REALITY
OF MATT MURDOCK
IS PROTECTED--

--AND TRAPPED--

--BEHIND THESE
WALLS.



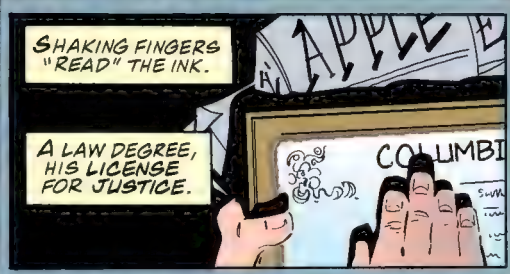
COMPUTER NETWORKS
TRANSFERRED WHAT
MONEY THERE WAS.

INVESTING, REINVEST-
ING IN SECRET.



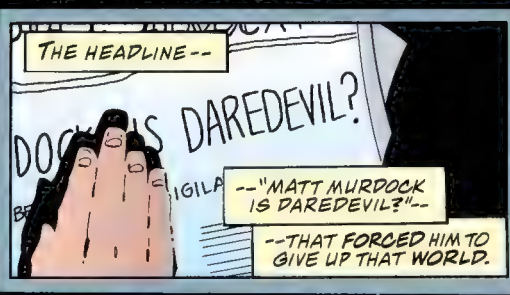
REMINDERS OF
A PAST LIFE.

HASTILY SNATCHED
AWAY IN THE SHADOW
OF A FAKED DEATH.



SHAKING FINGERS
"READ" THE INK.

A LAW DEGREE,
HIS LICENSE
FOR JUSTICE.



THE HEADLINE--

DOCK'S DAREDEVIL?

--"MATT MURDOCK
IS DAREDEVIL?"--

--THAT FORCED HIM TO
GIVE UP THAT WORLD.



HE KNOWS HE SHOULD
HAVE GIVEN UP MORE.

THERE'S DANGER EVEN
IN KEEPING THE
DAREDEVIL NAME.

BUT THERE'S PRIDE--

--RIGHTFUL, ARROGANT
PRIDE--

--IN WHAT HE'D BUILT
THAT TITLE INTO.

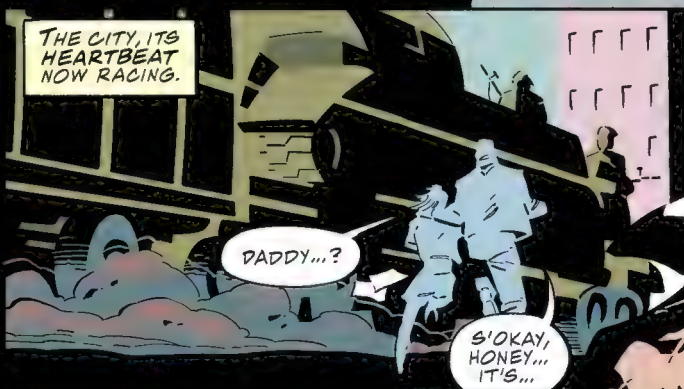


LOGIC TOLD HIM TO TURN HIS
BACK ON NEW YORK, TOO.

THE CITY THAT GOT
INTO A BOY'S SOUL.

KEPT PULLING HIM BACK.

WOULD NEVER,
NEVER LET HIM GO.



THE CITY, ITS
HEARTBEAT
NOW RACING.

DADDY...?

S'OKAY,
HONEY...
IT'S...



...OKAY...

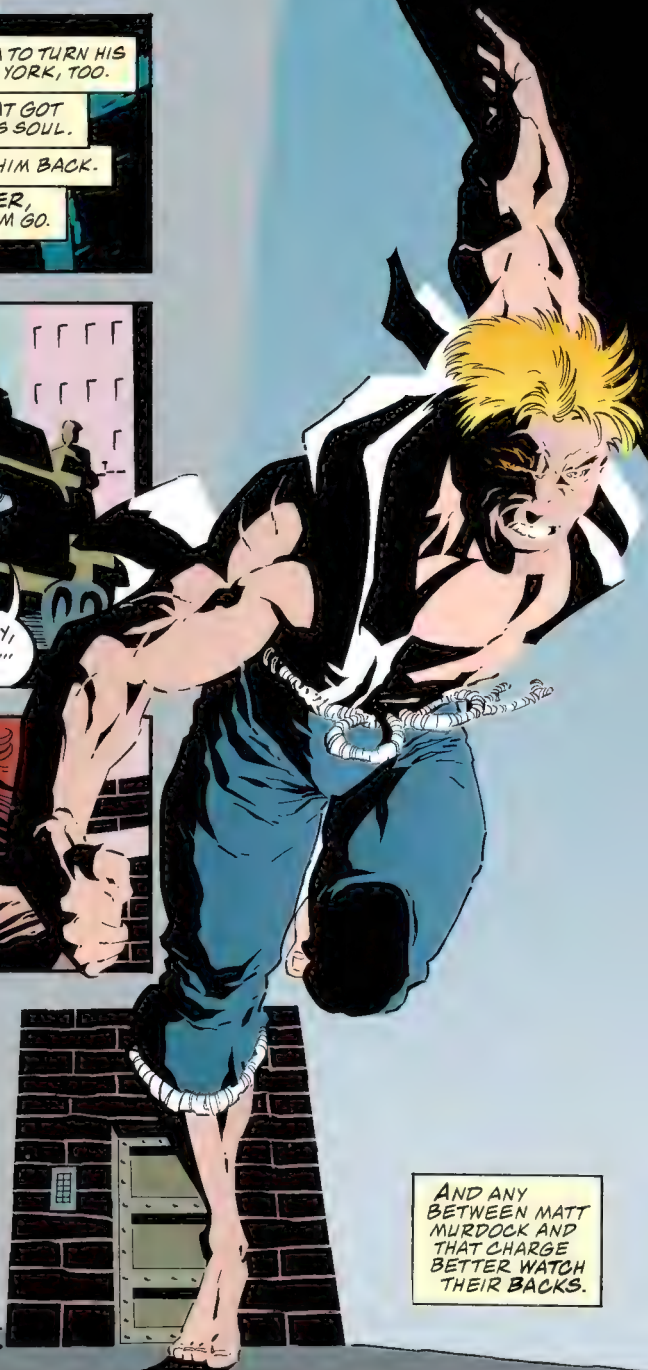
FEARFUL OF
ATTACK FROM
OUTSIDE.

CHILLED BY
GUARDIANS IN
TOO CLOSE.

HE CAN'T ESCAPE THE
DREAD, FEELING IT
FROM ALL AROUND.

BUT HE CAN SEND
A MESSAGE TO
WHOEVER'S TO BLAME.

YOU WATCH OUT
FOR YOUR OWN.



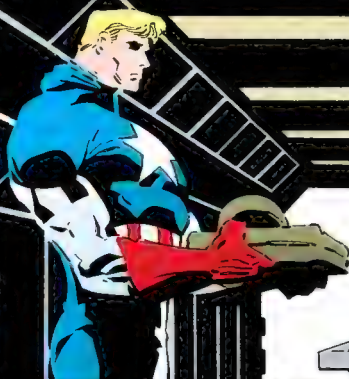
AND ANY
BETWEEN MATT
MURDOCK AND
THAT CHARGE
BETTER WATCH
THEIR BACKS.

AVENGERS
MANSION.

BASE OF
OPERATIONS
TO EARTH'S
MIGHTIEST
CHAMPIONS.

THE LOCKER IS THE
LATEST THING IN
HERMETICALLY
SEALED, HI-TECH
STORAGE.

THE UNIFORM INSIDE
IS MUSTY WITH AGE
AND MEMORY.



TWO GENERATIONS BACK.

THE WORLD IS AT WAR.

PRIVATE STEVE ROGERS ISN'T
LOOKING TO BECOME A HERO.

BUT AS HE WAITS FOR THE START OF
A TERRIBLE-MIRACULOUS EXPERI-
MENT, HE LOOKS TO HIS CHAMPIONS
FOR STRENGTH.



THEY'VE PROMISED HIM THE
PROCEDURE WILL LET
HIM SERVE HIS COUNTRY.

THEY'VE WARNED HIM
IT COULD JUST AS
EASILY KILL HIM.



HE RECALLS JEFFERSON'S
VISION: SOCIETY BASED ON THE
FREE EXCHANGE OF IDEAS.

NOW A WAR OVER INFORMATION
THREATENS IDEALS AT THE
HEART OF THE COUNTRY... AND
THE HEART OF THE MAN.

AUTHORITY HAS TIGHTENED ITS
GRIP-- "FOR THE GREATER GOOD."

BUT STEVE ROGERS WEARS THE
COLORS OF FREEDOM, PLEDGED
TO DEFEND THAT FLAG.

EVEN IF IT MEANS CAPTAIN
AMERICA MUST THROW IN
WITH THE DEVIL HIMSELF.





SIXTH AVENUE
AT 3rd.

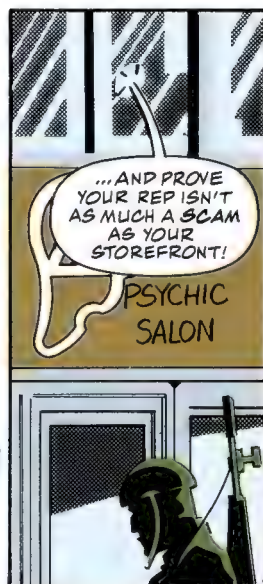
SAVE IT FOR
THE PAYING MARKS,
JILLETTE!

CALL ME
RANDI...

WHY STATE
THE OBVIOUS?

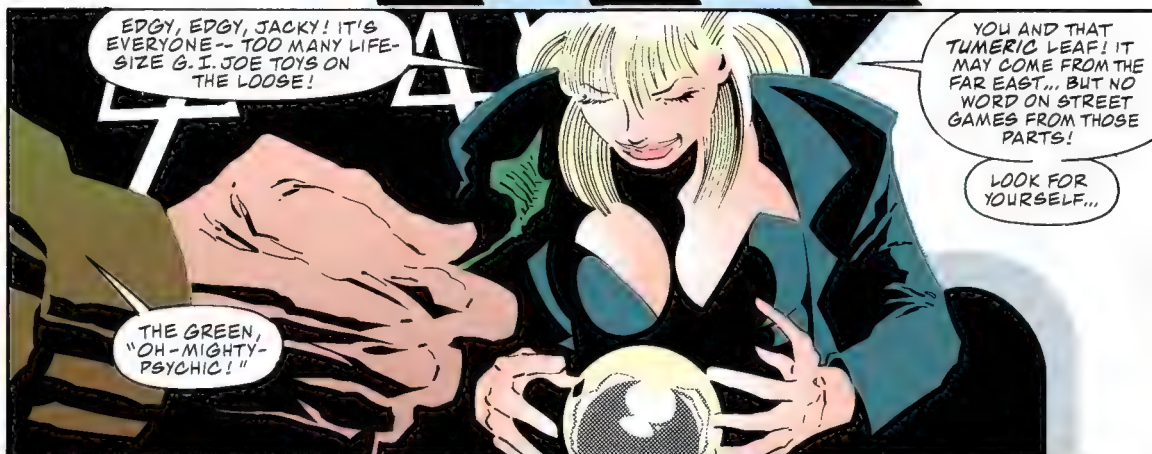
NOTHING
WRONG WITH
MIXING PLEASURE
WITH BUSINESS, IS
THERE, JACK?

WANT A RISE
OUTTA ME, GYPSY-
WOMAN? SHOW ME
YOUR CONTACTS
HAVE GOT WHAT
I NEED...



...AND PROVE
YOUR REP ISN'T
AS MUCH A SCAM
AS YOUR
STOREFRONT!

PSYCHIC
SALON



EDGY, EDGY, JACKY! IT'S
EVERYONE-- TOO MANY LIFE-
SIZE G. I. JOE TOYS ON
THE LOOSE!

YOU AND THAT
TURMERIC LEAF! IT
MAY COME FROM THE
FAR EAST... BUT NO
WORD ON STREET
GAMES FROM THOSE
PARTS!

LOOK FOR
YOURSELF...

THE GREEN,
"OH-MIGHTY-
PSYCHIC!"



I WOULDN'T KNOW
WHICH GLOBE TO
START WITH!

mm-hmm...
PROMISES, PROM-
ISES! WELL, WHAT-
EVER KIND OF CON
YOU'RE LOOKING TO
RUN, BATLIN--



--YOUR LITTLE WEED
THERE'S NOT BEING
MUCH HELP!

'COURSE,
IF IT'S NOT
BEING
BROUGHT IN,
MAYBE IT'S
HOME
GROWN...



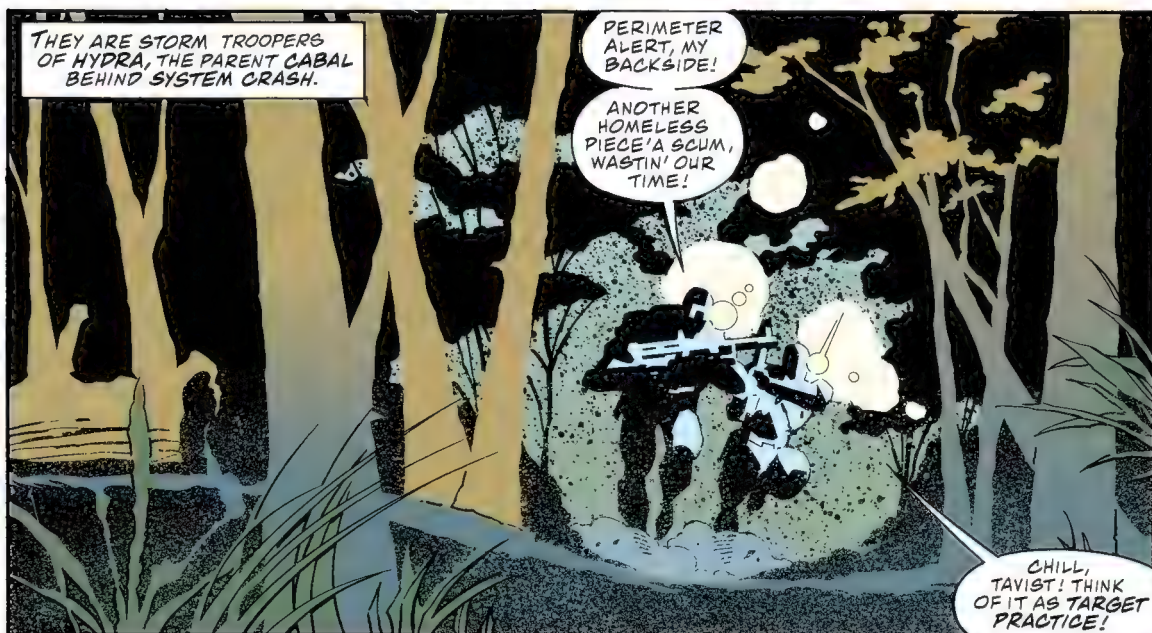
THEN ALL I NEED
NOW IS A GARDEN
SPOT...

...IN 303
SQUARE MILES OF
CONCRETE CITY...



THE BRONX.

NEW YORK
BOTANICAL
GARDENS.



THEY ARE STORM TROOPERS
OF HYDRA, THE PARENT CABAL
BEHIND SYSTEM CRASH.

PERIMETER
ALERT, MY
BACKSIDE!

ANOTHER
HOMELESS
PIECE'A SCUM,
WASTIN' OUR
TIME!

CHILL,
TAVIST! THINK
OF IT AS TARGET
PRACTICE!



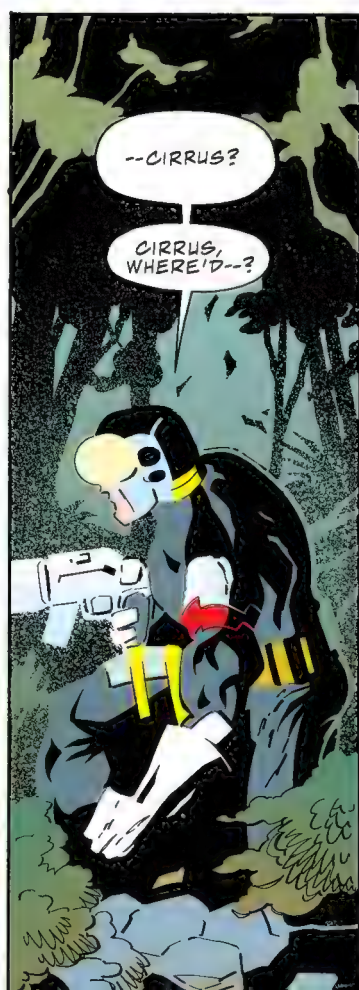
hryuuk--

I'M
WITH YOU,
CIRRUS--
ALL
RIGHT!



MAKE IT
A POINT
SYSTEM,
WHATTA YOU
SAY?

10 FOR
ARMS AND
LEGS, 25
FOR FINGERS,
50 FOR--



--CIRRUS?

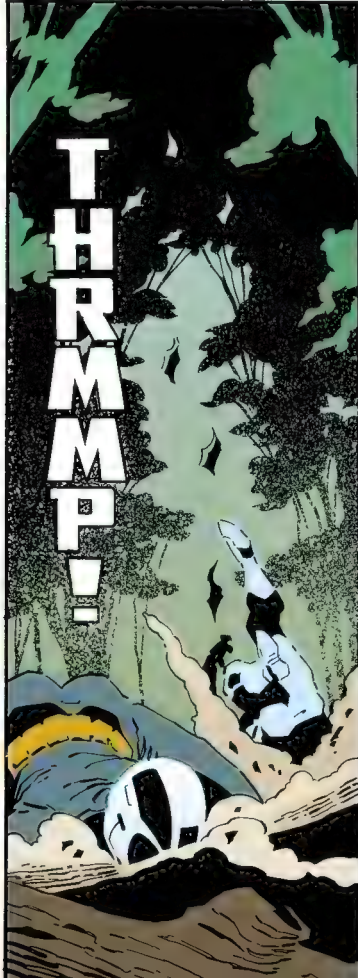
CIRRUS,
WHERE'D--?



ALL RIGHT, YOU
S.O.B.! WHOEVER--
WHEREVER--

--YOU JUST
PICKED YOUR
TIME AN' A
PLACE TO
DIE!

KLAANK!



THRRMP!



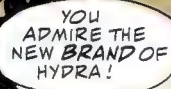
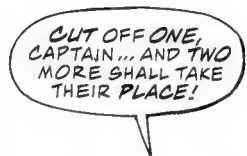
YOUR "TUMERIC"
LEAD PAID OFF,
DAREDEVIL...
THESE MEN
AREN'T PART OF
ANY CRUDE
"PIRATE"
MOVEMENT!

THEY'RE
PROFESSIONALS...



AND THEY'VE
GOT FRIENDS,
CAPTAIN!

MOVEMENT
IN THE BUSH!
10 O'CLOCK...
3 O'CLOCK...



DAREDEVIL AND CAPTAIN
AMERICA HAVE FACED
MEMBERS OF SYSTEM
CRASH BEFORE.

BUT NEVER
ALL AT ONCE.

AND NEVER WHEN THEY
WERE THE TARGETS.

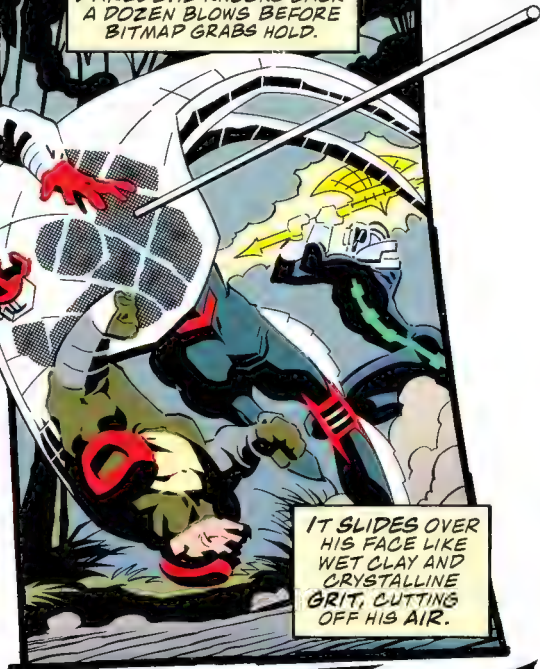


THE SERUM THAT GAVE THE SOLDIER
HIS PHYSIQUE IS NOW A POISON. IT
EATS AWAY INSIDE--



--CUTTING INTO HIS
STRENGTH TO COUNTER
THE BLITZ HAMMERING
DOWN.

DAREDEVIL KNOCKS BACK
A DOZEN BLOWS BEFORE
BITMAP GRABS HOLD.



IT SLIDES OVER
HIS FACE LIKE
WET CLAY AND
CRYSTALLINE
GRIT, CUTTING
OFF HIS AIR.

TORTURED MUSCLES SPASM
OUT OF CONTROL.



SOMETHING BEGINS TO
BURN, THE STENCH
ACRID AND MEATY.



BIOMIMETIC PLATING CRACKS.

BONES TWIST AND SHRIEK.







...PERHAPS YOUR YEARS
HAVE MADE YOU WEAK AS
WELL, NICHT WAHR?

JOHANN--THE RED
SKULL-- AND I, WE REMEM-
BER THE OLD DAYS, TOO.

BUT WE HAVE
ADAPTED TO TECHNOLOGY
AND OPPORTUNITY...

...WHILE YOU
REMAIN LOYAL TO
A DATED AND FADING
RED-WHITE-AND-
BLUE!

SHAKE
AND BAKE,
BARON?

JUST
ENOUGH TO
KEEP OUR GUEST
SUBMISSIVE,
TECHNOSPIKE!

YOU CHOOSE
WEAK ALLIES,
CAPTAIN...



I'M LOYAL--
TO LIBERTY!

SHOULDA
STUCK BY YOUR-
SELF, SOLDIER-
BOY-- LOT LESS
PAINFUL!

DON'T KILL
HIM 'TIL I'VE
HAD A CHANCE TO
SAMPLE HIM!



EXPERIENCE JUNKIE!
YOU'RE A SAD CASE,
INFOMORPH!

OUTLINES IN HIS HEAD
WARP AND SWAY.



STAR-SPANGLED'S
AN OLD THORN IN THE
BARON'S BUTT! TIME
HE GOT A TASTE'A
THE FUTURE...

EYYAARKK

FINGERS GRIP COLD MUD--

--PULLING FORWARD--


--ONE FISTFUL OF
AGONY AT A TIME.



GOT THE
WORD FROM
DOWN
BELOW!

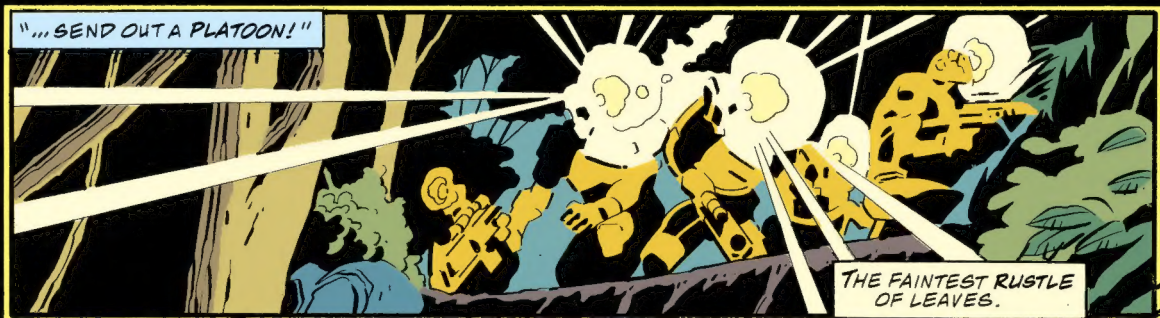
SWEET LI'L
SPECTRUM'S CRACKED
FAT BOY'S CODE--
WE'VE GOT THE LINE
EATER LOCALE!

EXCELLENT!
CAPTAIN AMERICA
HAS HIS USES, BUT
LET'S DISPOSE
OF THE HORN-
HEADED--



--WHERE--?!

OUR RISK-
TAKER LIVES
DOWN TO HIS
NAME! TEACH
HIM THE CONSE-
QUENCES...




"...SEND OUT A PLATOON!"

THE FAINTEST RUSTLE
OF LEAVES.

WEAPONS HUMMING WITH
BARELY-CHECKED POWER.

THEY MOVE IN STEP
WITH DEATH ITSELF.



HE SENSES
IT ALL.

SCENTING EACH BEAD OF SWEAT.

HEARING EVERY FINGER
AGAINST EVERY TRIGGER.

THEY THINK THEM-
SELVES PREDATORS.

BUT THIS JUNGLE'S
STILL THE INNER CITY.

AND ON DAREDEVIL'S
HUNTING GROUND,
THEY'RE ONLY PREY.



NEXT: THE FEROCIOUS
CONCLUSION TO TREE
OF KNOWLEDGE:
SOFTWARE!